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ABSTRACT

This document contains four papers from a symposium on global human resource development (HRD). "Globalization of Human Resource Management (HRM) in Government: A Cross-Cultural Perspective" (Pan Suk Kim) relates HRM to national cultures and addresses its specific functional aspects with a unique dimension in a global organization. "An Interpretive Study of the Perspectives of United States Repatriates on Repatriation and the Role of Their Employers" (Jean Rowe McFarland) reveals that repatriates feel misunderstood, unappreciated, and undervalued and organizations lose a high percentage of them due to their failure to help their international employees repatriate and be prepared for their repatriation. "Managerial Learning in the Transition to a Free Market Economy in Romanian Private Companies" (Maria Cseh) reports results of a pilot study that examined critical learning experiences of senior managers that enable them to lead successfully in the transition to a free market economy to determine what triggered their learning, what learning strategies they used, and how they make meaning of their learning experiences. "The Status of Human Resource Development in French Companies" (Berenice Hillion, Gary N. McLean) analyzes factors that affect the design and development of future trends in organization development, career development, and training and development in France and describes trends and specifics of HRD activities in French firms. (YLB)

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Chair: Monica M. Lee, Lancaster University, UK

Globalization of Human Resource Management in Government: A Cross-Cultural Perspective
Pan Suk Kim, University of Inchon

An Interpretive Study of the Perspectives of United State Repatriates on Repatriation and the Role of Their Employers
Jean Rowe McFarland, G. P. Morgan & Associates, Inc.

Managerial Learning in the Transition to a Free Market Economy in Romanian Private Companies
Maria Cseh, The University of Georgia

The Status of Human Resource Development in French Companies
Berenice Hillion, University of Minnesota
Gary N. McLean, University of Minnesota

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Globalization of Human Resource Management in Government: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

Pan Suk Kim
University of Inchon

Human resource management can include two large areas: personnel management and organization development. Development functions have tended to be somewhat disregarded in traditional public personnel administration and international public administration education. Thus, I hope to shed on some light on development functions in a cross-cultural perspective. Government have centered the arena of international commerce and open competition. What can government officials do to prepare themselves for their role in the global economy? Government officials must learn not only the customs, courtesies, and protocols of their counterparts from other countries, they must also understand the national culture and mindsets of the people.

My primary objective is to answer some of the most critical questions regarding human resources in global perspective. How can executives develop a multicultural management group in the public sector? What role should human resources play in the public management of negotiation and international collaboration? To develop and manage a global organization implies developing and managing people who can think, lead, and act from a global perspective, and who must possess a "global mind" as well as "global skills." Not one or a dozen "international specialists," but a multitude of executives and managers are needed to form the core of a global agency. I believe that the process of globalization requires a progressive transformation of our thinking about the role and tools of human resource management in the public sector. The notion that human resource management can and should make a contribution to the competitive strategy of a global village is indeed what this paper is all about.

The first part of this paper deals with the significant environment of global human resource management. I look at its cultural context by relating human resource management to national cultures. The second part of this paper is devoted to specific functional aspects of human resource management that have a unique dimension in a global organization; the role of human resource management in negotiation; the training and development of global managers and executives; and finally, proposals for potential changes in public administration education to better meet emerging demands.

Cultural Context in the Globalization of Human Resource Management

Familiar aspects of organizational life such as organizational structure, leadership styles, motivation patterns, training and development models, and indeed the very important concept of human resource management, are culturally relative and, therefore, need to be reconsidered when national boundaries are crossed. To facilitate such cross-cultural adaptation, what is required is more recruitment of top managers from different areas, acculturation through carefully planned career moves, and cultural awareness training.

It is essential to recognize the ability to cope with cultural relativity as the key requirement for the global managers of today and tomorrow. According to Geert Hofstede (1980, 1984, 1991), who is a Dutch Professor who has helped identify important dimensions of national character, culture refers to the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. Hofstede identifies four dimensions of national culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and masculinity/femininity. At the agency level, differences among cultures in these four dimensions have many consequences for management practices. For example, both Power Distance and Individualism affect the type of leadership most likely to be effective in a country. According to Hofstede, the ideal leader in a culture in which Power Distance is small would be a resourceful democrat; on the other hand, the ideal leader in a culture in which Power Distance is large is a benevolent autocrat. In Collectivist cultures, leadership should respect and encourage employees' group loyalties; incentives should be given collectively, and their

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distribution should be left up to the group. In individualist cultures, individuals tend to be more mobile, and incentives should be given to individuals.

The case in the United States: A subordinate is independent enough to negotiate meaningfully with a superior (a low power distance); both the superior and the subordinate are willing to take risks (a low uncertainty avoidance); and performance is important to both (high masculinity).

Developing Leadership in Global Negotiations

Negotiation is a process in which two or more entities discuss common, as well as conflicting, interests in order to reach an agreement of mutual benefit. In international negotiations, some of the aspects that differentiate the negotiation process from culture to culture include language, cultural conditioning, negotiating styles, approaches to problem solving, implicit assumptions, gestures and facial expressions, and the role of ceremony and formality. For international negotiations to produce long-term synergy, and not just short-term solutions, individuals involved in the negotiation must be aware of the multicultural facets embedded in the process. The negotiator must understand the cultural space of his or her counterparts. I think that negotiating is a skill and it can be improved. Fisher (1980) addresses five considerations for analyzing cross-cultural negotiations: (1) the players and the situation; (2) styles of decision making; (3) national character; (4) cross-cultural noise; and (5) interpreters and translators.

Fisher's five part framework provides scholars and consultants with a launching pad for both theory-building and practical applications. These days, negotiation is a popular theme for training courses. It has even been simulated in computer programs, which use a mathematical theory of games to calculate the optimal choice in a negotiation situation. These approaches are often, however, irrelevant for international negotiations taking place between diplomats and/or politicians and/or business representatives. The American approaches are based upon both American values and objectives accepted in American society. In international negotiations, assumptions about common values and objectives can not be easily made. Every player in the game plays according to his or her own rules. The quality of intercultural encounters in international negotiations can contribute to the avoidance of unintended conflict. In addition, negotiators should be empowered to decide themselves.

Training and Development for the Global Public Manager

According to Albert Bandura (1977, 1986), social learning theory seeks to explain how we learn. This learning is tied to two types of modeling processes: "symbolic modelling," which involves observing behaviors to be imitated by hearing or reading about them or watching them performed, and "participative modelling," which involves either verbalization or actual imitation. In other words, we learn by both observation and experience. Bandura asserts that we learn through the interaction of four elements such as attention (e.g., before behavior can be modeled, the subject must notice it), retention (e.g., the modeled behavior becomes encoded as a memory), reproduction (e.g., individuals translate the symbolic representations into actions and try to imitate the modeled behavior), and incentives including the motivational processes (e.g., incentives can affect which models are observed and how much attention is paid to them). Bandura also distinguished between two types of expectations in the motivational processes: efficacy expectations and outcome expectations. Self-efficacy is the degree to which the individual believes he or she can successfully execute a particular behavior.

This paper presents social learning theory as a theoretical framework because most past empirical research on cross-cultural training has lacked theoretical grounding. Training is frequently restricted to rather limited orientation sessions and cultural briefings, often imparted via lectures, handouts or case studies and supplemented by further reading. An analysis of intercultural competence (Gertsen, 1991) noted that cognitive awareness and understanding, though important, are not the only important attributes of a successful international manager or expatriate. Black and Mendenhall (1990) suggest that the more novel the international assignment is, the more extensive interaction with host country nationals will be, and the more culturally-tough or culturally-distant the host country will be from the home country. For example, consider an individualistic, low power distance, task-oriented, tolerant of uncertainty Anglo-Saxon manager taking up an assignment in a collectivist, high power distance, relationship-oriented, uncertainty-avoiding Asian culture, to use the Hofstede (1980) framework. In such cases training and development need to be rigorous and extensive. Self-development, especially awareness of oneself, one's culture and how it impacts on one's beliefs, values and behavior--an essential part of intercultural competence--can be developed through more experiential methods. The instrumental approach corresponds with low learner autonomy over both

content and process and a relatively closed strategy of training delivery, while the experiential approach refers to an open learning process with learners exercising freedom over the training program.

Among three major goals of learning, the first is access to basic data and information representing those facts which pertain to the specific work environment and relevant comprehension of professional knowledge (legislation, business processes, and sources of finance). The second is to acquire situation-specific skills and response tendencies including the skills associated with sensitivity to events (problem-solving, decisions/judgment-making skills, social skills and abilities, emotional resilience and proactivity). The third is to promote self-development including creativity, mental agility, balanced learning habits, and self-knowledge. Some useful training/learning examples are; cross-cultural sensitivity workshops, outdoor development with multi-cultural teams, field trips, action learning with a multi-cultural emphasis, job rotation involving international assignments, and multi-cultural team-building exercises.

Proposed Changes in Public Administration Education

Globalization implies many things to many people, and it has no simple, agreed-upon description. Its manifestations are different in different fields. Intellectually, among other things, it promotes conceptual revolution. Not necessarily linear, uniform, measured, and determined, the model of organic change is rather one of emergence and growth made possible by interaction, transaction, disequilibrium, and equilibration. Systems are self-regulating and capable of transformation in an environment of turbulence, dissipation, and even chaos. Gone is the certainty of laws and uniform relations. Now, transformation, multiple interpretation, and alternative patterning become the basis for understanding and constructing meanings. Open-endedness is an essential feature of the postmodern framework. Some view globalization or the postmodern framework as negative and destructive; and some see it as the latest fad; but now, many are coming to recognize it as a broad and pervasive mind shift that will bring with it challenges to find new ways of thinking and doing in various fields of human endeavor (Doll, 1993). Thus, a new version of teaching and curriculum should be developed in the era of globalization.

The globalized public administration school curriculum would be organized in a way that is different from any traditional school currently in operation. Graduates should emerge from such a program with a global mindset and a broader multidisciplinary perspective. Education in the twenty-first century will demand that faculty, students, and administrators assume the mind-sets of pioneering cosmopolites. The educational mission of the 1990s includes discovering knowledge about the managerial environment and disseminating it through teaching and publishing on an interdisciplinary scale. More courses focusing on particular applications instead of generic skills for global leadership development are necessary. Preparing students for emerging managerial challenges means breaking away from conventional models of public administration education. The key characteristics of a globalized public administration school should include cultural exposure, comparative study, problem-solving, flexibility in timing, multilingual training, team building, faculty development and exchange, and textbook and case study development.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

The field of international public administration has been characterized as being in an embryonic, preparadigm state of development. Only a few textbooks of international public administration are available and, of those, most deal primarily with a plain country study and/or description of international organizations from the structural and functional points of view. The scarcity of papers in the hypothetico-deductive category is also related to the stage of development within the field and the nature of comparative analysis. First and foremost, human resource executives need to learn about the fundamentals of global competition. They cannot assume a global strategic role without understanding global strategy. In order to become effective international partners, HRM executives must develop an understanding of what drives global competition in their businesses, how this competition affects business conditions, and what the social, political, and economic variables are that may have an impact on the agency's strategy in different parts of the world.

Secondly, a solid knowledge of strategy must be complemented by the globalization of professional expertise in both the workplace and the educational institution. This rests primarily on the acceptance and understanding of the cultural relativity of many HRM practices (i.e., in what areas is diversity in customs, norms, and values acceptable, and where is it essential to promote and defend

cultural synergy?). More teaching materials must be developed.

Third, the understanding of the global strategy, cultural differences, and HR capabilities requires thorough globalization of the HR function by developing a cadre of HR professionals with an international perspective and by educating our prospective students to have a global vision at school. Presently, however, many of the international HR skills are operationally domestic oriented and deal mainly with the expatriate population and transfers of people across borders. One of the reasons that has been cited by business organizations for the low use of cross-cultural training is that Korean top managers believe that a good manager in Seoul will be effective in Brussels or Frankfurt. This is illustrated not only in the lack of training provided but also in the use of the domestic track record as the primary criterion for selecting candidates for overseas assignments. Such a culturally insensitive perspective seems to be an important reason for many faulty international human resource practices.

This paper rests on the premise that effective global human resource management is a powerful competitive weapon. Removing the competitive handicap of parochialism is an essential task facing not only human resource specialists, but line managers and executives as well. I hope that my paper highlights not only the most crucial challenges regarding the management of people in global organizations, but also provides some ideas for specific actions aimed at speeding up and deepening the globalization process. I also hope that my paper stimulates other scholars and human resource professionals to rethink the fundamental questions raised herein and to propose additional solutions.

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An Interpretive Study of the Perspectives of United States Repatriates on Repatriation and the Role of Their Employers

Jean Rowe McFarland
G. P. Morgan & Associates, Inc.
Minneapolis, Minnesota

In-depth interviews with United States repatriate employees and spouses reveal their perceptions of repatriation and the role of the organization in supporting repatriates. Themes that emerged from this interpretive study suggest that repatriates feel misunderstood, unappreciated, and undervalued and that organizations lose a high percentage of repatriated employees with international expertise due to the organizations' failure to help their international employees repatriate and to be prepared for their repatriation.

Hammer (1989) cited communication skills as "one of the three central dimensions viewed as important to an individual's effective functioning in a foreign culture (the other two dimensions are the ability to deal with stress and the ability to establish interpersonal relationships)" (p. 249), but employers continue to assume that repatriate employees are returning to their home culture, so there will be no cultural adjustment problems as their may be when employees go abroad to live. Employers fail to understand that for repatriates, returning to one's home culture after an absence of several years *is* returning to a foreign culture.

Problem Statement

Unfortunately for both organizations and repatriates, studies show that a significant percentage of repatriate employees begin almost immediately upon their return to search for positions in other organizations whom the repatriates feel will appreciate and utilize the international expertise they have acquired as expatriates. Research shows that approximately 25% of repatriate employees do not intend to be with the same organization within a year and that approximately the same percentage actually do leave within a year of their return. Departure of an internationally experienced repatriate employee represents a loss to the organization of significant financial investment in terms of loss of future utilization of that employee's skills and the obvious and hidden costs of replacing the employee.

Purpose Statement

Reports of research of repatriation are scarce and even more scarce are interpretive research reports or repatriation. Little has been systematically studied in terms of repatriates' perceptions of the repatriation experience. The purpose of this study was to learn the perspectives of repatriates regarding their repatriation and to interpret those perspectives within a theoretical framework in order to understand the meaning of their repatriation experience.

Research Question

This study was designed to learn about repatriation as a *lived* experience from those who are living it and to attempt to understand the meaning of the phenomenon of repatriation. Repatriation cannot be separated from intercultural communication because repatriates are entering and striving

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to adjust to a culture that typically they have not been living in for two to five years, plus if they adapted well as expatriates, they adopted aspects of their host culture. Repatriates are often products of two or more cultures and feel they belong to none. They are intercultural citizens. Phenomenology has been labeled a fruitful perspective for the study of intercultural communication (Pilotta cited in Gudykunst & Nishida, 1989). Thus, the research is viewed as a hermeneutic phenomenological study, searching for description (phenomenology) and understanding (hermeneutics) of the phenomenon of repatriation. As such, only one research question was asked: What is it like to be a repatriate?

Literature Review

The literature reveals that organizations are not fully appreciative of the psychological impact of working and living in a culture other than one's own (McFarland, 1995, 1996) or of the cultural adaptation required to return to one's own culture after having lived in a foreign culture. If repatriates had received cultural preparedness training before going abroad, they would have a base of intercultural communication skills to help them make the cultural adjustment when they return. Unfortunately, if predeparture cultural preparedness training is provided, it often is inadequate and insufficient. Brislin (1981) believes intercultural communication training should attempt to improve cognitive, affective, and behavioral performance. However, what organizations offer under the guise of intercultural communication training may provide little more than the do's and don'ts of the target culture. Rarely, does it deliver underlying theories that allow the principles of intercultural communication to be applied to the variety of personalities that are in any culture and to be transferred to other cultures. Cultural preparation and adjustment are issues of human resource development and business outcomes for repatriates just as for expatriates.

Human Resource Development Perspective. When repatriates return, they find that the culture of their organizations and the social systems they left behind have changed or are not the same as remembered. They return to a *foreign* culture. Combined with factors of their expatriation experience, the effect of finding that their home culture is now a foreign culture can produce culture shock far more severe than the culture shock of living abroad where differences and lack of understanding of the culture were expected. Adaptation can be much more difficult.
Adaptation to a culture becomes synonymous with successful communication within that culture (Gudykunst & Kim, 1992) because culture *is* communication (Hall, 1981). Knowing the culture is more than being able to speak the language fluently as with repatriates returning to their home culture and language. Knowing the culture includes understanding the reasons behind communication styles and behaviors. Jawaharlal Nehru emphasized that "communication is. . .an *emotional awareness* of other people" (cited in Adler, 1991). Emotional awareness by both repatriates and their employers and social system members enables repatriates' to adjust to the culture they encounter upon reentry. Intercultural communication training can help people to be culturally sensitive and aware, and that, in turn, contributes to cultural adjustment.

Business Perspective. "Culture is not peripheral to business—it's central to business. It permeates every aspect of business" (Guptara, 1990, p. 13). Culture shock is costly. Repatriate employees who find themselves in organizations that are insensitive to culture shock and issues of repatriation also find that their international experience and expertise is undervalued and underutilized. They are frustrated that their organizations shoehorn them into domestic-related positions just to provide them a job. As a result, almost one-quarter of repatriated employees leave their companies within one year of coming home (McFarland, 1995). They take with them valuable knowledge and go to competitors. If one in four repatriates leaves the firm each year, there can be no long-term return on the investment and there will be significant cost incurred to replace these employees.

Due to lack of cultural sensitivity and awareness, employers do not realize that repatriate employees are not the same people that they were when they left; that repatriates have experienced self-growth and have acquired international expertise and professional skills; and that they are experiencing culture shock. Repatriates and employers need intercultural communication training,

and repatriates need psychological support as well as technical support. However, a 1991 Dartmouth College study estimates that 90% of U.S. companies offer less than three hours of training, total, for the return home (Engen, 1995). Given that American multinational corporations spend approximately $1,000,000 on each expatriate over the duration of a three-to-four year foreign assignment (cited in Black, 1992), the cost of a repatriation program to aid repatriates in adjusting to their home culture and reintegrating into the corporation is minimal.

Theoretical Framework

By definition, repatriation is returning to one's home culture. Successful repatriation is based on adaptation within that system, which, in turn, is a function of communication. As such, the theoretical framework is built of communication, culture, and general systems theories.

Communication Theory. A basic communication model (cited in Adler, 1991) indicates that the message sent is never the same as the message received. The messages received by listeners/observers are decoded and filtered through their personal perspectives. Those perspectives are determined by their experiences, so all interpretations of communications are made through the lens of one's experiences. When the lenses are different as they are between members of different cultures, interpretations are different; however, when awareness and sensitivity are heightened, the lenses of the message sender and the message recipient are more nearly aligned, and communication competence is heightened.

Hofstede's Theory of Cultural Dimensions. Hofstede's (1984, 1991) theory of cultural dimensions assists in characterizing, predicting, identifying, and interpreting general behavior within and among organizations. Hofstede's (1984) four cultural dimensions of (1) individualism versus collectivism, (2) power distance, (3) uncertainty avoidance, and (4) masculinity versus femininity stem from a six-year study in 50 cultures.

Individualism versus Collectivism. Individualism pertains to organizations in which the ties between individuals and between individuals and the organization are loose: Collectivism, on the opposite pole of this continuum, pertains to organizations in which people are integrated into strong, cohesive ingroups, which protect them in exchange for loyalty (Hofstede, 1984).

Power Distance. Power distance is the measure of the degree of inequality in organizations. It is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1984, 1991).

Uncertainty Avoidance. The essence of uncertainty is that it is a subjective experience, a feeling that is acquired and learned. Feelings and ways of coping with them belong to cultural heritage, are reflected in collectively held values of members of an organization, and lead to collective patterns of behavior in one organization (Hofstede, 1984).

Masculinity versus Femininity. The masculinity index refers to qualities that were historically associated with the male and the female genders. Some of these qualities are assertiveness, competition, and toughness for the male gender and nurturance, cooperation, and relationship-building for the female gender (Hofstede, 1984). These characteristics are pronounced in organizations.

General Systems Theory. General systems theory "[1] provides a perspective and vantage point for thinking about the organization. . . . [2] directs us to consider and influence the processes that are unique to self-aware systems. . . . and [3] helps us to adapt a big-picture view of development" (McLagan, 1989, pp. 78, 79). Cultural preparedness is based on systems theory assumptions and focuses on the intercultural communication processes that take place when individuals from one culture relocate to another culture (Gudykunst & Kim, 1992).

Research Methodology

This research is an interpretive study of repatriation in the Midwest United States.

Informants. Names of repatriates were acquired from top-level international human resource development professionals. The repatriate informants were connected directly as employees or indirectly as spouses to multinational organizations in Minnesota. Ages of the informants ranged from the late twenties to the mid forties. All except one had repatriate children. All had been abroad from 1 to 5 years and had been back in the United States from one to two years. Their foreign assignments were in Africa, Japan, and western Europe.

Data Collection. As recommended by Spradley (1979), Dobbert (1989), and van Manen (1990), unstructured, audio-taped, face-to-face interviews were used to gather data and to provide detailed, expanded accounts in verbatim records.

Data Analysis. The following strategies for discovering themes by using linguistic symbols have been suggested by Spradley, Tesch, Dobbert, and van Manen (1979, 1987, 1989, 1990, respectively) (sometimes using different terms for the same processes) and were used for thematic analysis in this study: transcription, highlighting, summarization, tree diagramming, domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, and componential analysis.

Findings and Interpretation

Repatriates report that repatriation is overwhelming, confusing, tiring, challenging, exciting, lonesome, and more difficult than expatriation. The findings of this study indicate that although organizations are beginning to address the issues of repatriation, their efforts are frequently disorganized, unstructured, and inadequate, even when employing outside repatriation consultants. Repatriates desire assistance in their repatriation, but, failing to receive effective support from their organizations, strive to deal with the repatriation process themselves and to support each other. Often this method results in unnecessarily disconnected and prolonged attempts during which repatriates suffer physically and emotionally and choose to leave the organizations in which they feel undervalued and underutilized. The following two metathemes emerged from the data analysis.

Metatheme One. *Open communication between organizations and their employees and among repatriates and their social system members is necessary for successful repatriation.*

It is well known that organizations provide satisfactory physical support for their expatriates and repatriates in terms of technical assistance and relocation. However, some needs that continually arose in the repatriate interviews were their needs for more communication with their organizations and people who were genuinely interested in their experiences; psychological support; and confirmation that they are an integral part of the organizational and international system.

Metatheme Two. *Organizations can enable successful repatriation by implementing a specific, supervised, structured repatriation program that begins before expatriation and includes intercultural communication training.*

Table 1. lists some suggestions made by informants for an effective repatriation program.

Table 1. Informants' Suggestions for Repatriation Program Content

Time Period	Suggestions
Before Expatriation	• Intercultural communication training • Negotiation of employment contracts for expatriation and repatriation • Formation of a sponsorship *position* in the organization to maintain contact between expatriates and the organization • Transition management counseling and assistance • Financial counseling
During Expatriation	• A process to keep expatriate's image in consciousness of the organization; e.g. articles and pictures in newsletters and on internet. • Opportunity to renegotiate repatriation employment contract

During Expatriation (continued)	• Detailed, up-to-date resources on home-culture housing, school systems, living costs, healthcare costs, educational opportunities • Ample compensated time to house hunt in States • Ample compensated time for bringing psychological closure to the expatriate experience • Facilitation for spouse and children • Frequent communication with expatriates
After Reentry	• Review of intercultural communication training comparing host culture with U.S. culture • Business and social opportunities to promote integration into organization • Honest debriefings regarding organizational climate and expectations • Psychological counseling • Safe environment for discussion and questions • Up-dated resources on housing, school systems, living costs, healthcare costs, educational opportunities, international social organizations • Ample compensated time for making family arrangements • Facilitation for spouse and children • Cultural adaptation mentor who is employed and supervised by organization, not a volunteer • Opportunities for employee and spouse to use intercultural knowledge and international expertise • Frequent communication with repatriates • Assistance for at least six months

Following are observations made by the repatriate informants and the cultural dimensions that aid in explaining the observed behaviors. When the underlying meanings of behaviors are understood from a cultural perspective, one can more easily view them as behaviors that are not personal affronts to the observer, which helps to defuse the situation and make it more readily manageable. Typically, the greatest incidences of conflict between cultures occurs within the femininity/masculinity and the power distance dimensions, which is the case in this study, as well. With each cultural dimension is the value assigned to the United States by Hofstede.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) (46). The uncertainty avoidance index of 46 falls near the midpoint of the continuum, indicating that the United States culture is not particularly anxious; however, there is potential for a low-to-medium level of anxiety. This potential is reflected in organizational cultures as employees suffer through downsizing, reorganization, reengineering, relocation, and other major changes, as well as in the responses of friends.

> Culturally the company has changed. There's a lot of anxiety about security and wellness of the business that wasn't there when we left.--*Employee*

> People think they are lucky to have a job. I don't feel I have as much control over my destiny as I did.--*Employee*

> They [friends] can't imagine everyday life in Austria. It's all very mysterious and frightening.--*Employee*

Power Distance (PD) (40). The power distance index of 40 is considered a rather low index when compared to that of some other cultures; but it allows potential for power displays.

There were turf issues going on, and I didn't get the job that I thought was a done deal. They bought me off, gave me a promotion. I was really mad. I was ticked off for a long time.--*Employee*

Masculinity/Femininity (MAS) (62). Although far from the highest masculinity index of 95 (attributed to Japan), a masculinity index of 62 is considered to be rather highly masculine, definitely not nurturing as associated with lower indices. This index is reflected in the lack of training and support, and the drive to work harder in order to achieve and acquire more.

Companies are losing [repatriate] employees because they are not making the effort to help them adjust.--*Spouse*

The relationships you had with friends before you left are pretty much gone.--*Spouse*

I don't know why companies think they can send someone someplace for five years, give them that degree of responsibility and excitement in their life, give them that broad experience, and then expect to bring them back to corporate headquarters and throw them in a cubicle.--*Spouse*

For preparation to go abroad, we were handed a notebook and told, "Have fun."--*Spouse*

We had a book--a small book that we worked through just to give us things to think about. But after we were back a month, our synodical mission sent us to Tuscarora Resource Center for a week of counseling.--*Employee*

Corporate headquarters doesn't have a clue what real life is all about. They just sit over there and do their little thing and complain that they don't have enough resources.--*Spouse*

When you come back, you're overhead. Human Resources just wants to get rid of the overhead. Be proactive. Plan for yourself. They aren't there for you!--*Employee*

When we came back, my wife, who gave up a career to expatriate, decided to ensure stability for the children by having at least one parent in the house. And it hasn't been easy; there are a lot of cultural pressures on my wife. The implication is if you stay home, you aren't doing anything.--*Employee*

Americans have a culture of "What can I get?" rather than "Who am I?"--*Employee*

You still can make it [your goal] happen. That's called salesmanship. It's called get a plan, think about it, sell it. Everybody today has to be a salesman."--*Employee*

I read a couple books on reentry. I don't think I actually did a lot of those things, though.--*Spouse*

Individualism/Collectivism (IDV) (91). The United States has the highest individualism index of all the cultures investigated (Hofstede, 1984). The high value is reflected in everyday behaviors of individuals: the focus on oneself or immediate family; the out-of-sight, out-of-mind mindset; and the male-female division, for example.

> Anybody who goes over on a foreign assignment and thinks somebody in the company is going to keep track of you, that's the biggest farce there is.--*Employee*

> The first thing they [repatriation consultants] did was put the men by themselves and put the women by themselves, and we didn't have any interaction. I would have liked to have heard some honesty from the spouses of the guys I was with.--*Employee*

> About the repatriation workshop, the only time we were all together, husbands and wives, was when the consultant was lecturing on facts and statistics. It would have been helpful for me to hear that other men were experiencing the same feelings that Doug was. We should have been in this together, not in separate rooms.--*Spouse*

> Friends aren't really interested in your international experiences. They tune you out.--*Employee*

> Friends who have never been to Europe don't really care about my experiences. They thought I was a little strange. They didn't really care to find out too much about what I've been doing.--*Employee*

> There's a period when you are repatriating that there's a void in meaningful friendships.--*Employee*

> It's "Oh, really," and then off to the next subject. People don't know how to relate, so they just don't.--*Employee*

> People just don't talk to each other as much as I would like to.--*Spouse*

If the repatriates had had intercultural communication training that included a theoretical foundation for application and transfer of learning, they would have been able to predict and understand many of the behaviors they witnessed in their organizations during their repatriation. If members of the organization had had intercultural communication training, they could have been aware of and sensitive to the needs of repatriates, who, in addition to having changed due to their international experiences, must adjust to organizational and societal cultures that have also changed in their absence. It is important to understand that repatriates are no longer the same as when they went abroad; nor are the cultures to which they return.

Conclusions and Future Directions for Research

This study suggests that the large organizations represented herein do not view repatriation as a critically important process for their employees, do not recognize their role in enhancing the process, and do not understand or appreciate the cost to organizations of ignoring repatriation and the international expertise of repatriates. The metathemes that emerged from the data analysis imply avenues for future research in terms of designing and developing organizational repatriation programs; intercultural communication training for repatriates as opposed to that for expatriates; improving the design, development, and implementation of training and debriefing sessions conducted by consultants; and the retention rate of repatriate employees who have participated in repatriation assistance programs..

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Managerial Learning in the Transition to a Free Market Economy in Romanian Private Companies

Maria Cseh
The University of Georgia

This paper reports the results of a pilot study on the managerial learning of senior managers of small Romanian private companies. The purpose of this study is to examine critical learning experiences of senior managers of small Romanian private companies, which enable them to lead successfully in the transition to a free market economy, in order to determine what triggered their learning, what learning strategies they used, and how they make meaning of their learning experiences. To attain the purpose of the study a qualitative research methodology has been selected applying the critical incident technique through in-depth interviews of selected senior managers. Findings based on three critical incidents described by a woman senior manager in the pilot study are reported and implications for management development and HRD are discussed.

In the politically turmoiled and economically destroyed former Eastern Bloc countries, a free market order is viewed as a quick and efficient way towards recovery. According to Nagy (1992), the countries of this region are faced with two enormous tasks. The first one - the creation of a new political regime incorporating a multiparty system and parliamentary democracy - is in the process of completion; while the second one - the transition from a centrally planned economy to a free market economy - is far from being completed.

As Sachs (1990, 1990a, 1991) has pointed out, economic liberalization, macroeconomic stabilization, and privatization are necessary conditions for a transition to a free market economy. Nevertheless, they are not sufficient. It is not enough to create the mechanism and institutions of a market economy if economic culture and entrepreneurial thinking are lacking. Since individual human decision-makers are the moving force behind all economic actions, the sufficiency condition for the transition will be satisfied by the development of a managerial professional class (Cseh, 1992).

According to Nagy (1992) and Cseh (1992), management development should be regarded as an integral and very important part of the historical changes that are now taking place in the former Eastern Bloc countries. Mugur Isarescu, the governor of the central bank in Romania, likes to attribute the country's improving economic performance to what he describes as the "spontaneous restructuring" of the economy as business people and managers of state and private firms learn to adapt to market mechanisms (Anonymous, 1995). This study is rooted in this spontaneous restructuring. Leading that restructuring is Romania's still small, but fast growing, private sector. Its share of gross domestic product (GDP) has grown from nil in 1989 to 35% in 1994, when it accounted for an estimated 51% of employment. Most of these firms are small to mid-size and represent the agricultural, trade, and service factors (Cseh, 1992; Anonymous, 1995). As Anton, Danciu, and Mitu (1996) pointed out, the profit made by the private sector in 1993 was 4.6 times larger than that of the state sector. They found that "the private sector proved it was capable of absorbing a large share of the labor force made available by public enterprises and of offering equal or even higher salaries to its employees. Private owners are an economic force that is proving to have better skills in administering their assets." (p.72).

Thus, a crucial role in the economic restructuring is played by the senior managers of these small and mid-size companies who are learning to adapt to market mechanisms and to cope with the radical changes characterizing the transitional period from a centrally planned economy

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to a free market economy of Romania. Although these managers are now expected to compete in a new market oriented environment, a review of the current literature has revealed that insufficient attention has been given to the managerial concerns implied in the transition process to a free market economy in Romania (Nicolescu, 1992; Cseh, 1992). In order to develop innovative management development approaches to help managers acquire the needed skills to manage in this transitional period, it is imperative to understand how managers learn what they need to know in order to successfully run their businesses in this new environment. No evidence was found of studies of this nature in Romania.

Theoretical Framework

The managerial learning literature shows that learning outside of a formal classroom setting has great importance in managerial learning. Learning from experience, trial and error, social learning, self-directed learning were just a few of the modalities surfacing in the reviewed studies (Verlander, 1992; Burgoyne & Hodgson, 1983; Lombardo, 1985; Zemke, 1985; Stuart, 1986; Akin, 1987; McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988; Dechant, 1989; Stuart, 1989; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Kops, 1993; Young, 1994; Burgoyne, 1995).

In the wake of all the above evidence, the main assumption of this study is that Romanian managers of private enterprises learn their jobs primarily through informal, incidental means. The theoretical framework of this study is therefore based on Marsick and Watkins's (1990, 1996) and Watkins and Marsick's (1992), theory of informal and incidental learning in the workplace. Informed by their research, the authors noted that most learning in the workplace takes place either on the job, in informal settings, or coincident to other work tasks. Learning results from internal or external triggers which may include surprises, new experiences, accidents, discrepancies between what we expect to happen and what does happen, problems, etc. Strategies or actions are then selected based on one's cognitive and affective understanding by filtering the information through one's selective perceptions, values, beliefs, and framing of the situation. The actions taken can be constrained by one's capacity to act in terms of necessary skills or authority needed to act. Following the action, one may observe or not what happened. In the case of observing what happened, individuals often attribute the undesirable consequences to external forces, and the desirable ones to their own actions. Out of the consequences and causal attributions, meaning is made of the experience and what is learned from the experience is retained.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine critical learning experiences of senior managers of small Romanian private companies, which enable them to lead successfully in the transition to a free market economy, in order to determine what triggered their learning, what learning strategies they used, and how they make meaning of their learning experiences.

In order to attain the purpose of the study, the following research questions were investigated:

1. What triggered the managers' engagement in the learning activity?
2. How do senior managers of small Romanian private companies learn what they need to know to run their businesses successfully in the new free market economy?
3. How do managers make meaning of their learning experiences?

Methodology

In studying managerial learning in the transition to a free market economy in Romania, a qualitative research methodology has been selected. The study is the first of its kind in Romania which explains its exploratory, descriptive nature. The critical incident technique, which according

to Yukl (1981) is especially useful in exploratory research designs to examine very specific, situational aspects of managerial behavior, has been selected as the research method for this study. This technique has been applied in this study through in-depth interviews of selected senior managers of successful small Romanian private companies.

The target population selected for this study is that of senior managers of successful small (2-99 employees) Romanian private companies. To select the sample for this study, the top lists of successful private companies of three Romanian counties, Bucharest, and the national list were consulted. These lists are published by the Chamber of Commerce of each county and of Bucharest and a top national list is also compiled and published. Senior managers of small private Romanian companies from the top lists with at least three years of existence were then selected for this study using the snowball or chain sampling technique. Each manager was asked to describe at least three critical incidents according to an interview guide which they received at the time they agreed to participate in the study.

The sample size was determined based primarily on informational considerations (to obtain in-depth description through information rich critical incidents) , and secondarily by the time (limited by the doctoral dissertation requirements) and resources (as the study is funded by the researcher) available to the researcher. According to Patton (1990) "The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information-richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with the sample size" (p. 185). Based on these considerations and informed by the literature (where the number of incidents varies from tens to thousands depending upon the depth of the study), the researcher decided on a sample size of fifteen to twenty managers from three counties of the region called Transylvania and from Bucharest, the capital of Romania and its surroundings. These two regions have been selected because the researcher was born and grew up in Transylvania, worked and has an extensive network of relationships in both regions. Managers were selected to represent both genders and the nationalities (Hungarian and Romanian) specific to these regions. Eighteen managers were selected by the researcher with the expectation of generating 40 to 60 critical incidents (the unit of analysis) which is a relevant sample in the critical incident literature.

The researcher traveled to Romania to identify the participants in the study and to gather data. In order to prepare the design for this study, the researcher had two in-depth telephone conversations from the United States with a senior manager of a joint venture in Transylvania and a senior manager of a private Romanian company in Bucharest. During these conversations, the researcher discussed the topic of her research with the two managers, the sampling process, the data gathering process, and the actual economic situation in Romania. The managers showed enthusiasm and understanding for the topic and offered their help in further networking and sample selection. The manager from Bucharest agreed to participate in a pilot study and a date was set for a telephone interview for this purpose.

All interviews were tape recorded and fieldnotes and memos were taken by the researcher immediately after each interview. The recorded interviews are in the process of being transcribed, translated, and analyzed by the researcher who is a native Romanian of Hungarian nationality, speaking both languages at mother tongue level. She is multilingual, has learned English in childhood, and has used it extensively in her work by translating, interpreting, and tutoring from English to Romanian and Hungarian, and vice-versa. One of the major difficulties in undertaking this type of translation arises from the fact that the language of management today is "largely English - and American English at that;" (Haire, Ghiselli, and Porter, 1966, p. 4). Although it is impossible to achieve a word-for-word translation, the researcher makes an attempt to keep the rendering as consistent as possible. In order to counteract the above mentioned problems characterizing any translation, parts of the translated interviews are retranslated by at least one person who is native Romanian and when necessary of Hungarian nationality who speaks fluent English and adjustments are made when necessary. The research data is analyzed using the content analysis approach.

This paper reports the preliminary findings of this study based on the pilot telephone interview with a woman senior manager of a small tourism/agribusiness Romanian private company with headquarters in Bucharest and offices in a region at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains.

During the approximately one hour interview, the participant described three critical incidents from her day-to-day work as a senior manager of a company which founded in 1992 managed to become successful amidst the challenges of the transitional period to a free market economy in Romania.

Findings

Data analysis of the three critical incidents revealed that the manager's learning was primarily informal and incidental and it was a result of both internal and external triggers according to Marsick and Watkins's (1990, 1996) and Watkins and Marsick's (1992) theory of informal and incidental learning. The analysis also uncovered several learning strategies used by the manager and what was retained from these learning experiences. Although the manager learned mainly informally, she also reported in one instance of using formal means of learning (e.g. Open University).

Triggers of Learning. In one of the incidents described by the manager, her learning was triggered by a discrepancy between what was offered to the clients and what the clients expected. As the manager related the situation: "There was a moment when we had to surpass the stage - at the beginning we offered just room and board, we spent a lot of time on building up a network of houses which could offer board, houses which could offer services. So, we spent a lot of time on this, we did marketing and people began to come. And there came the moment when they were coming, but were not satisfied, and we noticed that, too. It was clear that they did not want just to sleep and eat, they wanted to walk, they wanted a variety of programs, and it was very difficult suddenly to provide these for so many people, for us to be able to offer them diverse programs. Some of them wanted more sport, more nature, to walk, to hike, mountaineering, others wanted programs of more statical nature, for example bus tours to visit touristic sights. Therefore, from the point of view of the time, you know, it was an explosion so to speak."

Another external trigger came as a consequence of the transition to a free market economy in Romania. The manager describes the impact on her business of a ten year exemption of taxes for the owners who rented their houses for rural tourism which then "had suddenly produced a significant increase in the number of those who wished to enter in the housing renting circuit. So, it was connected to the legislation, a very powerful change for the better."

Although external triggers seemed to prevail in the manager's descriptions, she also revealed in a follow-up discussion an internal trigger - personal growth - which guided her steps toward a course at the Open University. She also began her studies toward a doctoral degree. The need for personal growth was one of the seven learning themes discerned by Akin (1987) in his study of 60 managers' varieties of learning.

Learning Strategies. Most of the learning strategies used by the manager were informal in nature (learning from others through collaboration, modeling, networking, relationships) and she also hinted toward the benefits of learning incidentally when she referred to the importance of her participation at different reunions, conferences: "you have contact, you see the experiences of other countries, organizations and you never know when they can be useful." The manager also mentioned her interest in formal training triggered by her need for personal growth. The learning strategies which emerged from the research data were categorized as collaboration, modeling, and networking, and all of them were implemented through relationships with others. Another category is that of formal learning.

Collaboration. Faced with an urgent problem to be solved (customer satisfaction) and guided by her belief that "it is clear that neither of us can be an expert in several fields, so it is good to meet people who each in their fields knows things better," the manager started a collaboration with teachers, doctors, students who knew the region, culture, history, nature. Talking about her feelings, she said: "It is normal to worry and I had to find solutions on the spot and very quickly and then I began this system of collaboration." The lack of time to stop and ponder in this period of rapid changes in Romania was mentioned again in her stories: "Unfortunately because of lack of time, even now I am not in a position so to speak, to sit and

think 'let's make a plan', many times we are too caught in the midst of the events."

The manager also mentioned the importance of learning from her mother who is her business partner and the benefits of the collaboration with the Tourism Ministry: "...we had to work it out together...they [Tourism Ministry] also had ideas and especially about how to formulate them [laws], how to put them in practice, how to exercise control in the future. So, the houses will be homologated, but this is not all of it, we have to take care and to be also concerned for the future, to check the maintenance of the initial high quality standards, you know. They can be good and after a year not good anymore. So, the idea of continuous control came from the Ministry."

Modeling. Modeling was another informal learning strategy used by the manager in order to cope with one of her critical incidents. As she was telling in her description of an incident: "I had to learn myself and I was greatly inspired by the French model. There was also the German one, but I found the French model closer to the situation in Romania. And I studied, of course the German one, too, and in fact I studied the classification criteria of many countries, Austria, Germany, Belgium, and France. I studied in depth both theoretically, I mean I practically read them, and I also had the chance to go and see. There are different types, and this is why I am saying that the French model is closer to ours, because there are different types. Some of them think that the inspection of the houses should be done by an outsider not from inside of the organization. Others, like France, and we also adopted this model, think that you need somebody from the organization and especially an insider, because you have to make people, the owners aware that they have to have high quality standards, you don't need somebody from outside to come to tell you this."

Networking. Networking was considered by the manager a very useful learning strategy for building relationships as well as for gathering and receiving information. She describes these events in the following: "These are very useful for me - these networks of different types and international associations...On one hand, they [associations] are very often editing some informational bulletins, twice per month depending on the events, and on the other hand they also edit a journal, 'Management', which is a monthly one. So, a lot of information. And besides these two types of publications which are periodicals, when it is the case we are informed about some other events." And she highlights that: "As they are saying, the coffee breaks are sometimes more important...Of course, it is important to listen to the presentations in general as a base for the beginning, but the discussions which follow, direct ones, are very efficient because you understand better what is happening."

Formal Learning. Describing her formal learning which is described by Marsick and Watkins (1990) as "typically institutionally sponsored, classroom based or highly structured" (p. 12), the manager remembers "about these Open University courses which I found very useful, courses at distance... I took the "Effective Management" course. Yes, it was competitive and I found it very useful." Referring to one of the things she learned "and a very important one, which may seem minor, but it changed a lot the way I think, is that you have to give priority to what is important and not to what is urgent. And I also learned, I heard the first time about this, about 'body language', so non-verbal communication which is also very important for me especially in my field of activity - services - where you work with people."

These examples illustrate how this manager learned as she worked to build her private business in the new free market Romanian economy. In the section which follows, a number of themes regarding what this manager has learned from these experiences will be presented.

Constructing Meaning from Learning Experiences: Making the Tacit Explicit. It is the tacit attributions, beliefs, and assumptions which make up incidental learning. In the following section a number of themes emerged from analysing this manager meaning making around her learning in the transition to a free market economy.

You Can't Make the Transition Alone. In reflecting of what she have learned from the incident when she had to come up with a quick solution to satisfy her customers' expectations, the manager recalled: "I realized that I can not do it alone and I thought about involving others, some people who were already ready, as I could not take people and begin to train them."

You Need a Working Plan. Referring to the same "customer satisfaction" incident, the manager concluded: "What can I tell you that I learned, so this idea that a working plan has to be still done, so first a general strategy and then, let's say an action plan and you have to try to forecast, in our case what a tourist would wish for, to try to forecast and to offer them some possibilities, some choices."

You Have to Take Risks and Teach Others about Risk Taking. Talking about the importance of risk taking and the necessity of teaching the owners of the houses who are members of her tourism agency about risk taking in the new economic environment, the manager remembers of some situations in the following: "...we are trying to promote [the business], and we are doing it, to bring in tourists, for the people [owners of the houses] to have some profit so both the agency and the people should have profit. But we can not guarantee that we will have tourists for maximum occupancy. And a lot of people did not understood this. At the beginning it was more difficult, being a risk for them, too. So, ok you will rent you house or you will try to rent it, but it is not sure that you will have profit. Therefore, we had to convince people that in every activity there is an inherent risk and especially at the beginning. Therefore, the profit can not come immediately, you need to make an investment, as small as it is to be able to recuperate. Anyway, tourism is a seasonal activity so you can't count on a permanent flow of tourists for 12 months. I am talking about rural tourism where most of the people come for vacation or to take a rest. It is not like in a city, where they can come for conferences or whatever other reason and you permanently have tourists. ...They couldn't understand that an entrepreneur has to take a risk, has to be more involved, and that each house has its specific features and therefore rural tourism has to be approached individually. It is not like in a hotel where everything is the same.

You Are Personally Responsible. Reflecting on her practice as a manager in the transition to a free market economy in Romania, the manager recalled: "What can I tell you, as we are in this situation, as a manager you have to take decisions alone while before [she is referring to the centrally planned economy, the communist society] everything was imposed on us, you know this very well. So, I had to take decisions alone and in a short time therefore, this had an influence on us. And in many cases, connected to this free-market economy, in many cases you have to risk so, you can not tell for sure if it will be right. There are big chances for success and for failure, too. You have to assume responsibility on that moment for what you are doing. It is not too good either, that in many cases as a manager you have to be responsible of others, so your decisions good or bad depend on the performance of the other persons, this being a big responsibility, too."

As these themes emerged from the pilot study, it remains to be seen if the themes identified will hold in the analysis of the remaining data.

Conclusions and Implications for HRD

Understanding the nature of the learning of Romanian private companies' senior managers as they transition to a free market economy may reveal ways to augment and support managers' learning, and it may also provide useful hints for designing and implementing management training and development programs in this country. As the 1990s are offering a greater opening to direct foreign trade and foreign investment in Romania, the results of this study will also help global human resource developers transfer management learning theories and practices across cultural and national boundaries.

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The Status of Human Resource Development in French Companies

Berenice Hillion
University of Minnesota

Gary N. McLean
University of Minnesota

Human Resource Development (HRD) activities were identified in France. A literature review focused on organizational changes and training practices and policies. A survey questionnaire was sent to the top 100 French companies (with 91 delivered) to determine the characteristics of "Ressources Humaines" (RH) departments and professionals, external and internal environments for RH, and specific RH activities. The total response rate was 65.9%.

Human Resource Development (HRD) is becoming increasingly complex. HRD is becoming the focus of economic and social debates because it involves a broader variety of employees rather than a small section of traditional personnel management professionals. One definition of HRD commonly accepted in the United States defines it as comprising the areas of career development, organization development, and training and development (McLagan, 1989).

Several studies designed to look at HRD activities in different countries all underline the fact that, although the majority of HRD principles applied internationally originated in the U.S., the nature and purposes of HRD activities differ in each country. It appears that the definition of HRD terms vary from one country to another, and that national differences are a crucial factor in determining the ways in which HRD professionals work (e.g., Okongwu, 1995; Yang & McLean, 1994). It is then important to remember that the definitions of HRD that have been adopted in the United States, and the way in which they are delivered, do not directly apply to other systems.

In France, the boundaries between HRD and Human Resource Management remain unclear. The "Ressources Humaines" (Human Resources) profession seems to cover all aspects of acquiring, developing, and sustaining a strong workforce. There are several factors that affect the design and development of future trends in organization development, career development, and training and development in France. This study provides an analysis of these factors and describes at the same time the trends and specifics of RH activities in French firms.

Statement of the Problem

This study was designed to determine the nature of Ressources Humaines (RH) activities in France. The research focused on the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of RH departments and professionals?
2. What are the external and internal environments for RH?
3. What are the specific RH activities?

The first focus, characteristics of RH professionals and departments, covered the issues of education and training of RH professionals, job definition, salary, work with external consultants/organizations, and job class. The second focus, external and internal environments for RH, looked at the status of RH within organizations, budget allocated to RH functions, role in organizational decision making, logistics of RH departments, support within organizations, external influences, challenges, and ethical framework of RH activities. Finally, the third focus,

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specific RH activities, addressed areas of interventions, types of training, number of trainees and hours of training per employee, sources for RH tools and programs, and current and future areas of interventions. A final goal of the study was to compare the specifics of RH professionals and activities in France with those of HRD in Korea, the U.S., and the People's Republic of China, based on the availability of studies on Human Resource Development in those three countries:

4. Are there any similarities between the characteristics of RH/HRD in France and Korea, the United States, and the People's Republic of China?

Definition

The study presents those aspects of Ressources Humaines (RH) in France that are concerned with training and development, organization development, and career development, so as to fit McLagan's (1989) definition of Human Resource Development adopted by the American Society for Training and Development. Ressources Humaines (RH) is the term most like HRD in France.

Literature Review

The literature review covered three areas. The first area addressed the specifics of French Ressources Humaines. The second area covered organizational changes in French firms and the impact they have on RH practices. Finally, a third area focused on developments and trends in training in France and which aspects of the French system affect these developments.

Specifics of French Ressources Humaines. Ressources Humaines covers a wide variety of activities: personnel management, training, "social development," improvement of working conditions, labor relations, internal communication, external relations, and advice to management on personnel management (Peretti, 1990). RH departments essentially exist in large firms (1,000 or more employees). Most RH departments consist of only a few professionals. RH professionals are generalists who address all areas of RH and who have a strategic importance in the organization (Onisep Avenirs, 1994). In addition, many external consultants/organizations exist, who generally provide specialized services to French firms.

RH department activities are shaped by internal and external factors, from personnel representatives to government agencies dedicated to employment issues. The complexity of the profession and the continuous interaction with external and internal elements are prominent challenges to RH professionals.

Organizational Changes: Current Practices and New Concerns. The primary concerns for RH professionals are the trend away from work ethics in the workforce, and the rigid bureaucracy and hierarchy of traditional management. Participatory schemes of work organization are unsuccessful and workers distrust consultative systems. Consequently, the focus for RH is to reduce cynicism towards employee empowerment efforts and to stress the importance of free flow of information throughout organizations. Another trend reveals that RH practices are now being developed independently of state regulations. Today, the very elaborate labor laws that shape RH activities are balanced by increased power and independence on the part of local agencies and private businesses. Overall, the top concerns for RH professionals are to develop communication at all levels of the organization, to deal with the new work organization, and to develop RH activities independently of government regulations.

Training Policies and Practices. A literature review was conducted on development and trends in training in France and the aspects of the French system that affect these developments. It showed that the vocational education system is restructuring to focus on skills currently in demand in the new job market. Also, companies have started dialogues with vocational schools, the government, and training centers in an effort to provide more qualifications among the young (Oeschlin, 1987). Managers serve as trainers in vocational schools and training institutions. Overall, the focus is on preparing flexible individuals and redistributing responsibilities for designing training to meet current needs.

Companies must structure their training policies and practices according to strict laws that require them to reserve a minimum of 1.3% of their wages for training. An estimated $22 billion are spent every year on training in France. There are approximately 400-500 committees responsible for administering training money collected from companies (Pollack, 1994).

Several new trends are developing: more practical experience for school-based training, increase in in-company training, easier access to training information and assistance, new national regulations to increase the number of women employees trained, efforts to counteract the high illiteracy level, and an increase in decision-making power for the regions.

Research Methodology

Population and Sample. The study involved a sample of 100 French firms which had been ranked as the top 100 organizations in France for the year 1994 (L'Expansion, 1994). In spite of an extensive literature review in France, no information was available on whether the 100 organizations had an RH department or internal RH professionals. Due to the lack of a database on RH professionals, it was decided to send the questionnaires to the "Ressources Humaines/Personnel" (Human Resources/Personnel) department in each organization.

Development of the questionnaire. A major challenge in the design of the questionnaire was to develop items that could be understood outside of the U.S.. In addition, the majority if specific HRD terms, originated in the U.S. and only recently introduced in France, have not been translated into French. In a concern to respect the current trend to protect the French language, HRD terms were translated into French whenever possible. The questionnaire was first written in English, then translated into French. After the translation was completed, a French HRD professional residing in the U.S. counter-translated the questionnaire into English. The counter-translation, as well as the French version of the questionnaire, were then checked by French graduate students in the U.S.. Finally, the French version was pilot-tested with four RH professionals in France. They all agreed on the appropriateness of the questions for the French corporate world, and on the clarity of the terms used and of the survey items.

The questionnaire included several Likert-type scale items. The first section of the survey gathered demographics on the respondents and the organizations. The other sections determined French company policies and practices in: training tools and methods, number of trainees, frequency of training, training subjects, and organization development challenges and changes. A section on ethical concerns for RH professionals was also developed.

Collection of Data. On February 14, 1995, questionnaires were sent to the top 100 French organizations. The mailing included a cover letter, a questionnaire, and a stamped envelope addressed to one of the researchers in France. Two follow-up mailings were sent. The second follow-up mailing included a postcard which asked participants to return the card if their RH activities were not developed enough to respond to the questionnaire. The total response rate was 65.9%. Of these, 63.3% had no significant RH activities. See Table 1, next page.

Analysis of Data. The data were compiled in a descriptive format. First, the data formed a description of the responding organization: number of employees in the organization, number of managers, years since creation of the organization, type of industry, geographical business coverage, and annual gross sales. Second, the data were compiled to address four questions: what are the characteristics of RH departments and professionals, what are the specifics of RH activities, and are there any similarities between the characteristics of RH/HRD in France and those of HRD in Korea, the United States, and the People's Republic of China?

Research Findings

Responses are presented in terms of number and percent of the total. The first part of this section provides a profile of the firms that responded to the questionnaire. This section summarizes the

Table 1
Response Rate

Status	n	%
Surveys sent	100	100
Not deliverable	9	9
Total delivered	91	91
Returned indicating insufficiently developed RH activities	30	32.9
Returned, unusable (no response, no post-card)	8	8.8
Returned, usable	22	24.2
Total returns	60	65.9

responses concerning all other items of the questionnaire and classifies the data received in four categories to answer the research questions presented earlier.

Characteristics of the firms. All of the firms that responded to the survey employed fewer than 10,000, but more than 100. A total of 36.3% employed fewer than 1,000, and 55.5% employed between 1,000 and 2,499. The majority of respondents (91%) indicated that there were fewer than 100 managers in their organization. A majority have between 50 and 99 managers. A definition of the term manager was provided to the participants in order to ensure common understanding. The term manager was defined as someone who conducts, directs, controls, supervises, and coordinates any industrial or business project, with responsibility for results. A total of 77.3% of the organizations were created more than 50 years ago, with 9.1% created more than 100 years ago. The most recently created organization was founded in 1978.

The respondents represented a wide range of business activities. The most widely represented industries were textile, medical, electronics, food processing, banking, construction, oil refining, and general trading. Only one respondent indicated his or her organization's total annual gross sales. This low response rate may be explained by France's cultural tradition not to discuss personal finances in specific terms (Barsoux, 1990). No response was given to questions related to multinational status.

Characteristics of RH Departments and Professionals. The majority of respondents (81.8%) were male, and all respondents had at least a three-year college degree, in business, education, or human resources. All respondents were managers, and the majority (77.3%) worked in Ressources Humaines departments, whereas 18.2% were members of top management with RH as their primary function. All respondents have taken part in the selection process for contracting external consultants and purchasing materials and programs. A total of 54.5% of the respondents have participated in the following training activities: conducting needs assessment for training, designing training, developing training materials, implementing training programs, and selecting audio-visual equipment for training. On the other hand, none of the respondents has taken part in evaluating RH personnel, conducting research in RH, developing career workshops, or developing a mentoring system for career development.

The majority of respondents (68.2%) indicated that fewer than five people were actively involved in RH in their organization. All respondents indicated that, since the creation of their department, no additional personnel had been hired for RH positions. The nature of the training received by RH personnel in the responding organizations was evaluated by two questions: What

type of training in RH areas did they receive prior to hiring, and what type of training had they received since they were hired by the responding organization. The majority of respondents indicated that RH employees had received some kind of training in RH-related fields prior to hiring, with 36.4% having received a degree in Ressources Humaines and 18.2% having completed training in management and business. In the case of post-hiring training, two-thirds indicated that they had not received any training related to their profession.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their organization used the services of external RH consultants/organizations. All responding organizations have contracted with external consultants, almost exclusively for projects that required expertise not present in the internal RH staff. The three most widely used means to select consultants were: a) used previously, b) used previously in other parts of the organization, and c) word-of-mouth. Cold calls, telephone books, consultant directories, and universities were not used for selecting consultants.

Finally, only two of the respondents chose to indicate annual salary range for RH personnel ($40,000 to $80,000). Once again, it should be noted that the low response rate for this item can de directly related to its focus on individual financial information, a topic usually not discussed publicly in France (Barsoux, 1990).

External and Internal Environments for Ressources Humaines. The purpose of the second section of the questionnaire was to determine the environment in which RH professionals perform their tasks. The questions covered the issues of budget and support for RH, status of RH in the organization, critical challenges for RH, and ethical issues for RH activities.

All respondents but one reported that there had been no change, either decrease or increase, between the budget allocated to RH activities in 1993 and that of 1994. No increase was forecast for the 1995 fiscal year in any of the responding organizations. When asked to compare the current status of RH to that of 1993, 86.5% of the respondents indicated that RH was considered more important in 1995 than in 1993. All other participants considered that the status of RH had not improved nor deteriorated over the past two years. When asked to indicate what group within the organization supported RH the most, the majority of the respondents (86.4%) selected management. Top management was believed to support RH by 22.7% of the respondents, and another 27.3% indicated that the unions supported RH activities in their organizations.

Responding organizations reported a wide range of challenges to be critical for RH activities. Overall, the top five challenges that were considered highly critical by the respondents, were: a) quality improvement, b) organizational restructuring (centralization), c) organizational restructuring (decentralization), d) acquisitions/mergers, and e) union relations. Only five of the responding organizations indicated that ethics, international competition, technological change, and productivity improvement were critical to RH activities. Finally, the challenges of staffing, growing immigration, government interventions, new mission of the organization, new market strategies, and re-engineering were not considered critical by any of the respondents.

Another organizational dimension that affects the environment in which RH professionals work is ethics. Only three of the respondents chose to answer the questionnaire item on ethical issues for RH. Ethical issues seem to be another topic not publicly addressed by the French (Barsoux, 1990). A total of 16 ethical issues were presented in a 5-point Likert-type scale to rate their importance from the perspective of RH professionals, with 1 indicating not important, and 5-very important. All respondents rated most of the issues with a score of 3 and above. All respondents rated "rejecting inappropriate requests/bribery" as being very important. In the same way, all indicated that "balancing organizational and individual needs," "avoiding instilling personal rather than work-related values onto others," "selecting appropriate interventions," and "addressing the possible negative consequences of an intervention based on the probable direct and indirect effects" were critical issues for RH.

Specifics of RH activities. Several specific activities were also identified.

RH Processes. Participants were asked to indicate the level at which several RH processes agreed with practices in place in their organization. A total of 81.8% of the

respondents answered that formal and systematic assessment of needs for most RH projects was not part of their organization's practices. The majority of the respondents (77.3%) agreed that little or no evaluation of the efficacy of RH interventions was conducted. In addition, a total of 90.9% of the respondents indicated that they did not devote a lot of time to determining the content of RH projects. Only 40.9% of the responding organizations pilot-test interventions before implementing them. The majority of respondents agreed that little or no assessment of the trainees' level of knowledge and skill level was done prior to designing and implementing interventions. In the area of training, 36.4% of the respondents indicated that training tools and methods were selected according to learning objectives, and 31.8% answered that their training tools and methods were assessed during their development. Only 22.7% of the respondents indicated that employees' progress was assessed after the intervention is completed. In the same way, only 22.7% of the organizations conduct employee performance evaluation according to pre-established criteria.

Areas of Intervention. Respondents were asked to rate a total of 30 areas of intervention according to their importance for RH activities. The areas were listed in two 5-point scales. The first scale was devoted to current areas of intervention and their importance today. The second scale was used for future areas of intervention. The current areas of intervention which were ranked the highest (at 4.5 or higher) were team management, organizational communication, problem solving, leadership, interpersonal communication, and managing change. Eight areas of intervention were considered unimportant (all less than 1.5) by the respondents: structural change in labor force, stress management, sexual harassment, ethics, welfare, diversity, union cooperation, and equal opportunity. Overall, areas which respondents considered important for current interventions were also expected to be important in the near future (3-year span). In addition, a few areas were expected to gain importance over the next few years: team management, team building, involvement in work teams, and interpersonal communication. The issues of sexual harassment, diversity, union cooperation, and welfare are expected to be of little significance in the future of the responding organizations' RH.

Training Hours and Number of Trainees. Respondents were asked to indicate the number of employees who had received training in 1994. Respondents were to provide information on average hours of training per employee according to job groups: executive, "cadres" (seniors managers, middle-managers, first-line supervisors), sales people, clerical/administrative employee, production workers, and customer service employees. Then, respondents were asked to indicate the total number of hours of training received by employees in 1994, according to the same job groups. Table 2, next page, shows the compiled average number of trainees and compiled averages for number of hours of training. Executive personnel and "cadres" received the most training, with respective averages of 51.9 and 42.7 hours of training. Production workers were the largest group of people trained.

Types of Training and Origin of Training Programs and Tools. Respondents were asked to indicate whether the training programs used in their organizations were a) developed internally, b) custom designed by external vendors, or c) a combination of both. A total of 10 types of training are exclusively produced by internal RH professionals: executive development, management information, new employee orientation, trainer training, product knowledge, finance, health management, personal growth, labor relations, and clerical training. Finally, respondents indicated that four types of training were never offered in their organizations: diversity, sexual harassment, customer education, and abuses of office supplies. The 10 most widely used (all over 95%) types of training, regardless of their source, were: quality control, quality transformation, human relations, decision making, management development, management skills, motivation, safety management, and communication skills.

Training Materials and Program Media. Another item asked respondents to indicate which training materials and/or program media were used in their organization. Respondents were also asked to specify the source of the materials and media, either a) produced in their organization, b) custom-produced by outside sources, or c) purchased off-the-shelf. Audio-cassettes, computer software (disks), overhead projectors, and public seminars/workshops were used by the majority of organizations (68.2%). All of them were purchased off-the-shelf. Other

Table 2
Training Hours and Number of Trainees (n=17)

Level	Average hours of training per employee	Average number of people trained
Executive	51.9	45
Cadres [Senior managers Middle managers First-line supervisors]	42.7	114
Sales People	7.8	49
Clerical/Administrative employees	10.0	63
Production workers	6.5	227
Customer service employees	7.3	23

materials, such as films, videotapes, and self-assessment materials, were used by 40.9% of the responding organizations. Those were either custom-produced by outside vendors or purchased off-the-shelf. Slides, textbooks, and workbooks were used by 36.4% of the responding organizations, and custom-produced, either internally or externally. Finally, on-site seminars/ workshops were used by 22.7% of the respondents and produced internally. A few materials and program media were not used by any of the responding organizations: computer software (CD-ROM), videodisks, interactive video, teleconferences, out-door programs, and games/simulations.

Training Methods. Respondents were asked to specify the methods used for training personnel in their organizations. A 5-point scale was used to rate the frequency at which each of 14 methods listed was used, with 1 indicating never and 5-very often. The most frequently used (all at 4.3 or greater) training methods were a) discussions, b) formal on-the-job training, c) informal on-the-job training, d) one-on-one coaching, and e) case studies. By contrast, self-assessment instruments, games/simulations, computer-based learning, lectures, role plays, and teleconferencing (both video and audio) were rarely used (1.4 or less).

Similarities between the Characteristics of RH/HRD in France and Those of HRD in Korea, the U.S., and the People's Republic of China. In order better to define the status of HRD in Korea, Ahn and McLean (1992) sent a total of 300 survey questionnaires to Korean companies. In the same way, Training Magazine (Industry Report, 1995) conducted a study of 13,000 U.S. organizations. Finally, Shi and McLean (1996) mailed a total of 177 questionnaires to U.S.-Chinese joint ventures in mainland China with the goal of defining the status of HRD in those organizations.

The largest group of people trained in France, Korea, and the U.S. are production workers. Management skills and development, communication skills, and safety management are major types of training in those three countries. While the majority of training programs are developed internally in French and U.S.-Chinese companies, most programs offered in Korea and the U.S. are developed jointly by internal and external services. One of the most widely used methods of training in all four countries is case studies. Korea and France share current HRD issues: Team building, problem-solving ability, leadership, and motivation. The studies in France, Korea, and the People's Republic of China show that motivation will be a major issue in the near future in the three countries. French and Korean organizations will also focus their HRD activities on team building, problem solving ability, and leadership.

Conclusion

Several conclusions were drawn. First, it appears that the majority of French RH professionals hold managerial positions and have a minimum of a three-year college degree. It also appears that French RH departments focus their activities on four main areas: training, quality management, selection of consultants, and purchase of programs and materials. Internal RH professionals work extensively with external consultants, especially in the area of training.

RH professionals conduct little, if any, assessment, either for interventions, materials, tools, trainees' knowledge and skill levels, or employee performance. The top current areas of intervention are team management and organizational communication; for the future, they are team management and involvement in work teams. The training delivered the most often are quality control and quality transformation. The most widely used RH methods are discussions and on-the-job training (formal and informal). Finally, limited technology is used in RH interventions. The most widely used materials and media are audio cassettes, computer disks, and overhead projectors.

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